FAQ 33: What are good approaches to conducting focus groups with parents?

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statements linked to different questions related to parental mediation have been

attention has been paid to parents' perceptions regarding their own internet pa

a specific type of strategy? How do they feel when their children are online? D

worries? What are their perceptions about their responsibilities with parenti

methodology, specifically, focus groups with parents, are recommended in order to

their role as mediators with the internet.

Common practice

Qualitative methods are commonly used by researchers to explore in-depth specific questions where the facts

It is also important to choose an appropriate location in order to make the group feel comfortable in establishing a conversation about sensitive topics. The children's school is usually considered one of the most convenient places to develop the study as all the participants are familiar with it. It is also important to make the participants feel confident that the information that is going to be discussed in that session will not be disclosed with their personal information.

The sample characteristics can also influence the dynamics of the focus group. As far as the number of group members is concerned, an ideal group is no more than eight parents and not less than six. The personal characteristics of the parents also need to be taken into account. Individuals may be recruited with a similar socio-economic status (level of income and education). The gender or age of the parents should not influence the recruitment process, but those individuals may be selected who usually spend more time helping or guiding their children when they are online. This will help researchers conclude in an indirect way if the parent's gender has an influence when mediating the children's use of the internet or not.

Pitfalls to avoid

There are few bad practices that you need to avoid in order not to negatively influence the focus group dynamic.

It is clear that even though the recruitment of the sample is done with the objective of collecting individuals with very similar socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics in order to permit a more fluent and natural dialogue between them, every individual has her/his own personality. Try to make a quick scan of the participants at the beginning of the session, and identify those with stronger or weaker personalities. Opinion leaders as well as individuals who don't express themselves in a discussion can influence the process of the study. Make sure that the interventions of all the partifid\dll\0s1\s\B396,rtobf0f\Beatio26\A\[5]\Fab\37&sua)-3\s\s\sig(d)2(1lr6er3s\M\p7Y\B(lts\i\r5l8en(,)8\v\Top(i)p7((opiari

without taking into account parents' perceptions and opinions. This is why focus groups with parents were organized.

The main purpose of this qualitative technique was to observe and analyse parents' discussions in order to explore in depth what motivated them to apply certain strategies. All of the questions studied implied sensitive topics related to individual perceptions: how confident they felt with helping their children when

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